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The combination of gender bias and gender stereotypes in children's literature has been analyzed for the past fifty years by numerous researchers. Despite the scrutiny, the research continues to find that females are often under-represented, and both male and female characters display stereotypical traits. In an effort to shape children's attitudes, it has been suggested that it is important to incorporate literature in the classroom that portrays females and males equitably and reflects nontraditional roles and responsibilities. The majority of studies have examined children's picture books through the analysis of title, text, and illustrations. In this study, the titles, main characters, and text of novels considered for use in one North Carolina county's middle school curriculum were analyzed for gender bias and stereotypes. The results showed an under-representation of females as main characters and of males with feminine gender traits.

Headings:

Young adults' literature

Young adults' literature/Evaluation/Sexism

Content analysis/Young adults' literature

GENDER BIAS AND STEREOTYPES IN YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE: A
CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NOVELS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

by
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Introduction

There are many factors considered when teachers, schools and school districts choose the books that are used in the classroom. From the school and school system's perspective, cost is certainly a factor but reading level, content, interests, literacy needs, diversity, gender, and multiculturalism also factor into determining the textbooks and other reading materials utilized in the curriculum (Lynch-Brown, 2008). Accessibility also plays a role within the individual teacher's classroom as a supply of appealing and appropriate reading materials for lessons and for school-wide designated reading programs like DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) or SSR (Sustained Silent Reading) are desired. As a result of restricted budgets, the classroom library collection for fiction reading materials in particular is often built from donations or school library extras and not necessarily the criteria that create a diverse assortment of books.

Due to the substantial amount of literature available to the teacher, recommended reading lists constructed by a variety of entities such as specialized departments within a school district, teachers' associations, and library associations may also play an important role in the choices that teachers make in determining the specific books that are included in a classroom's collection. The quality of these recommended lists and the criteria considered when compiling them can have a distinct impact on reading materials utilized by teachers. While it is assumed that all of the criteria listed above (reading level,

content, interests, literacy needs, diversity, gender, and multiculturalism) are considered in assembling these recommended reading lists, of particular interest for this study is how gender is represented on the lists and consequently in the classroom.

Just as schools and teachers have become more aware of providing materials that represent the entire student population and making a concerted effort to include ethnically and culturally diverse lessons in their curriculum, gender equity considerations should be included in the process. There have been several studies that have analyzed gender bias and gender stereotypes in textbooks (Blumberg, 2007; Evans & Davies, 2000), but few studies have examined literature in the form of fiction novels integrated into the school curriculum. As mentioned before, there are a multitude of fiction novels that could be used in schools so many teachers rely on the recommended lists to narrow their choices. This study focuses on two reading lists suggested for use in the Wake County school district of North Carolina. The first list is the Wake County Middle School Novel List (Wake County Public School System, 2009) which includes “tried and true” novels “approved for whole class instruction” as well as “questionable titles” that require principal approval. The second list is the 2009-2010 North Carolina School Library Media Association’s (NCSLMA) State Middle School Battle of the Books booklist. The analysis of this literature will focus on addressing the following research questions:

1. Do the books represent an equal distribution of male and female characters in the titles and main characters?
2. Do the main characters display stereotypical characteristics and behaviors?

Literature Review

Gender Equity

The idea of equity between the sexes has been discussed for many years. Two significant events that brought the issue of gender equality to the attention of the general population in the United States were the women's suffrage movement in the nineteenth and early twentieth century and the feminist movement in 1960's – 70's. Recent events in the political arena have also brought the discussion about gender equity into the national headlines with the confirmation of another female Supreme Court Justice and the inclusion of female candidates in influential offices during the last presidential race. Because of these high-profile examples, it is reasonable to assume that progress continues to be made toward a society where females and males share equal status. However, within the field of education, there continues to be evidence that progress is moving very slowly toward gender equity in the classroom (Sadker, 2009). Even more specifically within the education environment is the concern that the books children read are not keeping pace with gender equity issues and continue to reflect gender biased or gender stereotyped characters, behaviors, and activities (Taylor, 2003; Hamilton, 2006; Frawley, 2008; Karniol & Gal-Disegni, 2009). With all of the factors considered when choosing appropriate materials for instruction, why should gender be included on the list?

The basis for concern in promoting gender equity begins with a child's development of gender identity. One theory that identifies a possible framework for building gender identity is based on the concept of gender schema (Bem, 1981). Schemas are information structures built through processing of observations and stimuli.

As children try to make sense of the world around them, they are constantly absorbing input from all of their senses, attempting to process it in some way by organizing or classifying the information, and then storing it away in their memory to be accessed at a later time when a similar situation or input is presented to them again (Hyde, 2007). Schemas allow people to more easily interpret the vast quantities of input they receive because there is a set of characteristics in their memory to which they can compare and associate new information. Basically, schemas bring some personal semblance of order to the world.

A gender schema provides a basis for distinguishing between males and females. “A gender schema is a network of expectations and beliefs about male and female characteristics. Schemas affect what we pay attention to, what we interpret, and what we remember about events” (Broderick & Blewitt, 2010, p. 259). Usually by the age of three, children have developed a gender schema and have associated certain physical, behavioral, and occupational characteristics to a particular sex.

The sources of input for building gender schema are everywhere, but for young children, books can be a particularly potent source (Frawley, 2008; Tsao, 2008). Sitting in a caregiver’s lap while looking at illustrations that reflect a captivating story provides tactile, visual, and audio stimulus from which children draw a multitude of characteristics that contribute to their gender schema. The problem arises when the illustrations and stories contain gender biases and gender stereotypical information. Author Mem Fox has been an outspoken advocate for gender-balance in children’s literature and wrote,

Gender stereotypes in literature prevent the fullness of female human potential from being realized by depriving girls of a range of strong, alternative role models. I believe that male potential is also stunted by such material. Everything we read, from sexist advertisements and women's magazines to romance novels and children's books, constructs us, makes us who we are, by presenting our image of ourselves as girls and women, as boys and men (Fox, 1993, p. 84).

Coming full circle to revisit the question of why gender should be considered when choosing reading materials in schools, it is possible that continuing to have textbooks and literature in the classroom that represent the sexes in stereotypical ways or even show a bias toward representing one sex more than the other has the potential to develop and continue stereotypical attitudes in children. As Evans and Davies (2000) point out:

The studies reviewed by Schau and Scott demonstrated that among children, sex-equitable materials were associated with more flexible sex-role attitudes, whereas sexist material contributed to more sex-typed attitudes. Schau and Scott (1984) argue that for fulfillment of individual potential, a flexible gender-role attitude is necessary, and thus equitable portrayals of male and female characters with both masculine and feminine traits are needed in children's textbooks (p. 256).

The same idea can be applied to literature used in the curriculum. If using sex-equitable textbooks is considered important in aiding the development of more flexible attitudes about gender, then it would seem likely that using sex-balanced and sex-fair literature in the curriculum would also contribute to a more equitable view of the sexes for students.

Gender equity impacts both males and females, and the issues surrounding gender biases and stereotypes directly affect school-age children. In two separate publications dated sixteen years apart, Sadker, Sadker and Zittleman's (2009) book, *Still Failing At*

Fairness: How Gender Bias Cheats Girls And Boys In School And What We Can Do About It and Wheeler's (1993) publication, *How Schools Can Stop Shortchanging Girls (And Boys): Gender-equity Strategies A Practical Manual For K-12 Educators*, a number of costs associated with gender inequity are outlined and possible solutions expressed. Among the costs are the limitations children place on their choice of occupations, limitations on their exploration of activities and interests that match their personality and abilities, and limitations on behaviors.

The suggestions to counteract the effects of gender bias and stereotypes in the classroom that are offered in both books include discussing gender issues with students, helping students explore and participate in a broad range of educational programs, raising student's awareness of ways in which gender bias and stereotypes are transmitted, and providing materials that depict both genders equally in nontraditional roles, activities, and occupations. With this advice in mind, the conscious decision by teachers to include gender neutral and gender equitable reading material becomes an even greater need when choosing literature to include in the curriculum.

Gender Bias and Stereotypes in Children's Literature

There have been many studies that have looked at the prevalence of gender bias and stereotypes in children's literature (Weitzman, Eifler, Hokada, & Ross, 1972; Grauerholz & Prescosolido, 1989; Gooden & Gooden, 2001; Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus, & Young, 2006). While these studies analyzed literature to assess the amount of gender inequities involved, some researchers have also attempted to make the

connection between the development of gender stereotypes and the way children interact with and interpret their environment (Frawley, 2008; Karniol & Gal-Disegni, 2009).

Through exposure to stereotypical materials, children continue to associate behaviors, appearances, occupations, and activities with a particular sex, and consequently alter their behaviors and perceptions to conform to the perceived norm. Most research has focused on picture books because these are the books to which children are exposed while they are in the process of developing their gender schema, and therefore may have the greatest impact on the formation of stereotypes and attitudes about the worth of a particular sex. Because picture books in particular are read over and over again, the effects on gender schema are tremendous (Weitzman, Eifler, Hokada, & Ross, 1972). Basal readers, also called beginning reader textbooks in some studies (Karniol & Gal-Disegni, 2009), are another format that has been studied because they are read multiple times at an early age.

Until recently, the majority of research studies into gender inequities in children's literature have focused on recording the types and amounts of gender bias and gender stereotypes contained in picture books. The feminist movement in the 1960's-70's fueled the perceived need to analyze how males and females were represented in children's literature. The turning point in the study of gender issues and their manifestation in children's literature emerged with the publication of an empirical research study conducted by Lenore Weitzman, Deborah Eifler, Elizabeth Hokada, and Catherine Ross (1972). The study appeared in the *American Journal of Sociology* and became a "rallying point for feminist activism...from the founding of feminist publishing companies to the raising of consciousness among more conventional

publishers, award committees, authors, parents, and teachers” (Clark, Kulkin, & Clancy, 1999, p. 71).

Weitzman and colleagues (1972) examined all the Caldecott Medal winners since the inception of the award in 1938, but conducted an in-depth analysis on the 18 winners and honorees from the five years leading up to 1972 (1966-1971). To gather a representative sample of the children’s literature of that time, they also analyzed Newbery Award winners, Little Golden Books which were inexpensive books (\$0.39) sold at grocery and general merchandise stores, and etiquette books.

The focus of their study was on gender differences in the illustrations, the titles of the books, and the characteristics of the female or male main characters. Some of the imbalances they observed were in the illustrations and title information. For the illustrations, there were 261 pictures of males compared with 23 pictures of females. When animals with obvious identities were included, the bias was even greater. The ratio of male to female animals was 95:1 (Weitzman et al., 1972, p. 1128). With regard to title information, they found a ratio of 8:1, male to female. Both of these results suggested to them that female characters were “invisible” and grossly under-represented.

Their analysis of the traits associated with male and female characters in the books suggested that “the storybook characters reinforce the traditional sex-role assumptions... Many parents want their sons to grow up to be brave and intelligent and their daughters to be pretty and compliant” (Weitzman et al., 1972, p. 1146). Weitzman et al. also concluded that “boys and girls are socialized to accept society's definition of the relative worth of each of the sexes and to assume the personality characteristics that are "typical" of members of each sex. With regard to relative status, they learn that boys

are more highly valued than girls” (Weitzman et al., 1972, p. 1125). About their findings, Weitzman et al. (1972) wrote:

In the course of our investigation we read several hundred picture books and feel that we can assert, with confidence, that our findings are applicable to the wide range of picture books. In fact, the Caldecott winners are clearly less stereotyped than the average book, and do not include the most blatant examples of sexism (p. 1127).

As noted earlier, the impact of this study was wide-spread. Most researchers studying gender issues in children’s literature cite this study and copy the model that Weitzman and her colleagues used in their analysis of books (Clark et al., 1999).

The next noteworthy study that followed in the footsteps of Weitzman was conducted by Grauerholz and Pescosolido in 1989. They hypothesized that there had been a shift to a more equitable distribution of female and male representation in illustrations, book titles, and main characters since Weitzman’s 1972 study, but they wanted to study this transition by analyzing over two thousand “easy books” published in the United States between 1900 and 1984. “We were particularly interested in overall trends in the visibility (appearance in the titles) and centrality (appearance as focal characters) of female and male characters” (Grauerholz & Pescosolido, 1989, p. 114).

There was some difficulty determining books that were classified as “easy books” for the first thirty years because the cataloging system was not consistent across the period. However, cross-referencing with later catalogs solved this problem. The numbers of books analyzed during the first thirty years (1900 – 1930) was significantly less than after 1930, on average fifty per decade compared to 200 per decade and even 500 per decade in the 1970’s and 80’s. Improvements in the printing process meant

books were less expensive to produce and an influx in foreign authors during the 1930's led to an increase in the number of children's books available.

Despite these variations, Grauerholz and Pescosolido found gender differences in all of the categories they analyzed. The male to female ratio in titles was 2.7:1; the male to female ratio for central characters was 3:1; the male to female ratio of adult central characters was 4.2:1; and the male to female ratio of animal central characters was 5.8:1. These results do show an improvement from the ratio determined by Weitzman but gender inequity still existed. One interesting result of this study was the fact that the data showed a curvilinear trend in the ratios of male to female in titles as well as central character roles with the earliest and latest books showing more equitable distribution while the peak time for inequity in gender representations was in the 1950's.

Continuing along the timeline from 1972 to the present, a study by Gooden and Gooden in 2001 illustrates that Weitzman, Eifler, Hokada, and Ross's measuring tools for gender inequities in children's literature remained the standard. Like Grauerholz and Pescosolido, Gooden and Gooden (2001) focused on analyzing each aspect of the illustrations including the activities of the prominent characters. Their sample consisted of 83 books listed as picture books on the American Library Association's (ALA) list of Notable Children's Books. The researchers decided to analyze this particular list because it represented the ALA's choices for outstanding quality books for parents, librarians, and educators. Their results suggest a more equitable distribution of illustrations featuring males and females, 1.2:1. They did not record characteristics of the central characters other than to note whether they were illustrated displaying traditional or nontraditional qualities. Overall, most females were displayed in

traditional roles (mothers, grandmothers, washerwomen), however, there were some female adults shown in nontraditional roles such as doctors and chefs (Gooden & Gooden, 2001). Males were seldom seen performing domestic tasks like caring for children, grocery shopping, or housework.

Four recent research studies analyzed particular gender issues in children's literature as well as made connections between exposure to gender stereotypical material and the effects on gender schema building by children. Statements like "Picture books often provide very young children with some of their earliest perceptions of gender, race, and class- creating a stockpile of images for 'children's mental museums'" by Frawley (2008, p. 291) and "...stereotyped portrayals of the sexes and under-representation of female characters contribute negatively to children's development, limit their career aspirations, frame their attitudes about their future roles as parents, and even influence personality characteristics" by Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus, and Young (2006, p. 757) illustrate the researchers' thoughts about possible effects of children's literature on the development of children's attitudes toward gender.

In 2006, Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus, and Young tackled the issue of gender stereotypes and female under-representation in children's picture books. Their analysis focused on "gender representation in pictures and characters; characters' behaviors, settings, and personality; and the relationship between author sex and character sex" (Hamilton et al., 2006, p. 759). After considering the validity of just looking at award-winning books which the majority of previous studies had used, they decided to analyze best-selling children's books which they located using the top sellers lists from the *New York Times*, Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble and *Publishers Weekly*. They also

included several books from the 2001 New York Public Library “list of books everyone should know” (Hamilton et al., 2006). In total, they studied 200 popular children’s books.

Their results showed once again a 2:1 male to female ratio in main characters and title characters. With regards to stereotypical portrayals, female main characters were more than three times more likely than males to be shown as nurturing and caring characters. Of the 23 female adult characters portrayed in these books, 21 exhibited traditional feminine occupations, such as teacher, stewardess, maid, nanny, and nurse. For the male characters, 33 of 37 characters displayed traditional masculine occupations that represented a much wider range of jobs than those for women. The analysis of the gender of the author in relation to the gender of the main characters and title characters revealed that male authors tend to write stories with male title characters and main characters at a ratio of three to one. Female authors, on the other hand, show no tendency to favor one sex over the other. Combining this result with the fact that there were more male authors than female authors in the books that were analyzed, it becomes clear how there was an over-representation of male characters. The results of their research suggest that gender equity in children’s books is still questionable even after years of study showing under-representation of females and stereotypical portrayals.

Approaching the issue of gender equity in children’s literature from a different perspective, Frawley (2008) studied how first and fourth graders reacted to and interpreted two Caldecott Award-winning books. He was specifically looking to see if gender schemas played a role in how the first and fourth graders remembered or distorted details in the books. As Frawley explained, “Children not only recall more

gender-consistent information compared to gender-inconsistent information, but may even misremember or distort gender-inconsistent information to make it conform to their gender schemas” (p. 292).

Frawley presented an audio-taped reading of each book to the students then asked them to retell the story either immediately after listening to the story or one day later. He also followed up any distortions that were presented with interview questions. Frawley found that both the first and fourth graders misremembered and distorted the story in ways that would suggest they could not accommodate contradictions in the characters’ behaviors with their gender schemas. As an example, there were prominent male characters in both books that displayed fearfulness and crying. In both cases, the students either said the incidents of crying did not happen or the fearfulness was categorized as something else such as danger to the female character. This study is an example of how children misinterpret details so the characters in a story can conform to their gender schemas. The results revealed that children as old as ten and eleven years old perceive and interpret information based on the stereotypical qualities they have associated with a particular sex. If they are doing this for fictitious stories, what is happening when they process real-life scenarios?

A study by Albers, Frederick, and Cohen in 2009 reinforces the results found by Frawley. Albers et al. asked third grade students to draw pictures representing members of the opposite sex at the end of a unit on gender and racial stereotypes. In particular, they were interested in seeing how the children represented the interests and experiences of boys and girls by trying to step into the shoes of the other. The analysis of the art activity concluded “Boys associated girls with specific activities, especially indoor

(dancing, playing with dolls, shopping), associated specific objects with girls (flowers, butterflies, unicorns, bunnies), and with specific behaviors (love, romance, love for shopping)” (Albers et al., 2009. p. 245). Girls, on the other hand, were more likely to associate boys with outdoor activities like sports, space exploration, and camping. They also drew specific objects associated with boys like sports equipment, weapons, and wild animals or insects like snakes and spiders. Finally, girls depicted boys portraying specific behaviors like soldiers, scientists, and athletes. In addition, although the boys and girls were drawing visual representations of the opposite sex, the techniques used while drawing mirrored their own genders rather than that of the opposite sex. For example, girls tended to use more colors and use soft, curved lines where boys used fewer colors and sharp angular lines.

Even though it would appear from the Albers et al. study that gender stereotypes are fairly set by the time children reach elementary school, another 2009 study by Karniol and Gal-Desgni shows that gender stereotypes can be modified with appropriate reading material. They studied the impact of gender-fair versus gender-stereotyped basal books on first grade readers. Their study focused on two first grade classes with very similar environmental influences. Karniol and Gal-Desgni wanted to test whether having first graders read gender-fair material rather than gender-stereotyped material had any effect on future displays of stereotypical or non-stereotypical attitudes. In order to carry out the study, they chose two basal readers that are common but portray genders differently. One classroom read the set of basal readers that had gender stereotypical qualities and the other classroom read the gender-fair basal readers that portrayed both

males and females engaging in the same activities where males performed female tasks and vice-versa.

After reading the books, the children were given a questionnaire that asked their opinion of what activities were appropriate for males or females. The results showed that “in the 1st-grade children, exposure to more gender-fair depictions was effective in changing both boys’ and girls’ gender stereotypes” (Karniol & Gal-Disegni, 2009, p. 417). The results of this study show that the books to which students are exposed in the classroom can have an effect on the development and modification of gender schemas and stereotypes for children. This is all the more reason to consider the books that are recommended to students at school.

Based on this final study, despite children’s exposure to gender stereotypical information or the lack of strong role models for females in books when they are infants and toddlers, it is still possible to modify gender schema through the literature utilized in elementary and secondary schools.

Methodology

Just as the researchers discussed in the previous section utilized content analysis in analyzing gender bias and gender stereotypes in picture books, visual images, and basal readers, content analysis was used in this study to analyze books middle school teachers in the Wake County Public School System of North Carolina might use in the classroom as a part of their curriculum or reading programs. For the purposes of this particular study, the Wake County Middle School Novel List (Wake County Public School System, 2009) and the 2009-2010 North Carolina School Library Media

Association's (NCSLMA) State Middle School Battle of the Books booklist (North Carolina School Library Media Association) were analyzed for gender bias in the title and main character. Only the NCSLMA Battle of the Books list was analyzed for gender stereotypes.

Neuendorf defines content analysis as "the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics" (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 1) and includes the idea that content analysis is a way to analyze a range of human interactions observable in print or other media. The general approach to the content analysis of the books in this study conformed to a more traditional definition where manifest content was categorized and counted for the analysis of gender bias in title and main characters, and latent content was interpreted, categorized, and counted based on pre-determined definitions of what describes male and female behavioral characteristics in the analysis of stereotypical gender traits.

Sampling

The overall goal when determining the amount and types of materials to include in a content analysis is to choose a representative sample that will allow the researcher to generalize the results to the population. For this study, the population refers to published juvenile and young adult books considered for use in the middle school curriculum. Two lists associated with schools in North Carolina were analyzed in order to get a representative sample.

The first list represents a state-wide reading list and is based on the North Carolina School Library Media Association's 2009-2010 Middle School Battle of the

Books competition (Appendix A). During this competition, selected student teams from private and public middle schools across the state take part in a series of contests at the county, regional, and state level. The students are tested on the content of a select list of juvenile and young adult literature. Schools choose the members of their teams in a variety of ways, but usually the Battle of the Books list for the next year is recommended summer reading for all students interested in competing. When school resumes in the fall, students are tested on their knowledge and chosen for the team. While all students are not required to read the books on the list, the books are often found in the classroom and library. Thus, a large number of North Carolina middle schoolers are exposed to the titles.

While looking for a possible second “recommended” reading list to analyze, it was discovered that North Carolina, unlike many other states, does not produce statewide lists of suggested reading material to supplement the curriculum. If a county wishes to have uniformity between all of its schools, the county is responsible for producing its own list. The Middle School Novel List from the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) is not a “recommended reading” list, however it does fit the criteria of literature that is sanctioned by the county for use in the classroom by the whole class, groups in the class, literature circles, or summer reading programs (Appendix B). According to Rusty Taylor, director of media services for Wake County Public Schools, the county could never agree on a recommended list but did produce the approved list after issues arose in a school about the appropriateness of a book (Taylor, 2009). The approved list contains “Tried and True” novels, “Questionable Titles”, and novels that are “NOT Recommended for Middle School Instruction.” If a teacher would

like to use a book that is not on the list or within the “Questionable Titles,” the principal must approve it. For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that most teachers would limit themselves to the “tried and true” and “questionable” titles.

Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis is the particular part or incidence of the text or media the researcher is categorizing, coding and recording. There were two separate units of analysis needed for this study. The first was the book title where a female, male, or no gender classification was determined for each book based solely on the words in the title. The second unit of analysis was the text of the books. The text was used to determine the sex of the main character and the presence of specific gender character traits displayed by the main character.

Illustrations are an important component of picture books and to a lesser degree in textbooks, so in previous studies the illustrations have been included in the content analysis. In this study, because the novels on both lists are juvenile and young adult chapter books, they do not contain many illustrations. The cover illustration may be the only important illustration and in some studies this illustration has been analyzed, but some of the books included on this study’s sample lists have been published multiple times and have different covers. It was beyond the scope of this study to acquire all of the different versions of every book to study the cover illustrations, so illustrations were not analyzed in order to be consistent across the entire sample.

Categories and coding

The primary tool in content analysis is coding particular pieces of the text being sampled and placing them in pre-determined categories that characterize the research question being studied. As noted earlier, the first set of coding executed for this study was to document male, female, or no gender titles for the books. Masculine or feminine names, entities and qualities were considered when determining if a title was to be recorded as male or female. If there was no defining quality, the title was coded as no gender recognizable.

The next set of data to be coded was the gender of the main character. The first step was to define what makes a character the main character in a story. For this study, the main character was the central figure around which the plot revolved. An additional consideration was whose voice was used to tell the story. To determine the gender of the main character or even if there was a main character, two methods were utilized.

For the WCPSS novel list, the entire text of the books was not read. Instead, a combination of summaries and book reviews from the Wake County Public Library OPAC and NoveList were used to determine the sex of the main character. The non-fiction books which were included on the list were also coded. Since non-fiction may be written about both genders, it too may contribute to a bias for the representation of one sex over the other. Examples of two of non-fiction books that were coded as having male or female main characters are *Maritcha: A Nineteenth Century American Girl* (female) and *Fearless Fernie: Hanging Out with Fernie and Me* (male).

For the NCSLMA Middle School Battle of the Books list, the entire text was read to determine the main character's gender and match his or her traits with sixteen gender characteristic traits chosen for this study. The same rules applied to the Battle of the

Books list as the WCPSS list to determine the gender of the main character, and again, both fiction and non-fiction books were included.

The more difficult coding task was associated with categorizing gender characteristics. The coding sheet used for this study was based on the “masculine” and “feminine” stereotyped personality traits reported in Evans and Davies (2000). Evans and Davies combined Bem’s (1981) research on gender schema and Richardson’s (1983) guidelines for the evaluation of elementary basal readers to create a list of gender personality traits.

Richardson’s traits included strings of description such as “exhibits creativity, ingenuity, and resourcefulness,” “has high degree of problem-solving ability, logical thinking,” and “lacks competence in tasks and has mishaps and accidents” (Richardson, 1983, p. 76). Evans and Davies (2000) transformed Richardson’s strings of description into a list of personality traits by choosing specific words that represented the gender-related traits. The list included 16 traits; 8 were considered masculine and 8 were considered feminine. (p. 260). To aid in the consistency of the coding, they also included a definition for each trait.

Table 1 shows the list of 16 gender personality traits, their categorization as masculine or feminine, and the corresponding definition for each trait. Due to the limited time for analysis and the fact that all of the books on both the WCPSS novel list and NCSLMA Battle of the Books list are novel length, only the Battle of the Books list was analyzed for gender characteristics.

Table 1: Gender Personality Traits with Definitions

Personality Traits	Definition
<i>Masculine traits</i>	
Aggressive	Actions and motives with intent to hurt or frighten; imparts hostile feelings
Adventurous	Actively exploring the environment, be it real or imaginary
Argumentative	Belligerent; verbally disagreeable with another
Assertive	Taking charge of a situation, making plans and issuing instructions
Competitive	Challenging to win over another physically or intellectually
Decisive	Quick to consider options/situation and make up mind
Risk-taker	Willing to take a chance on personal safety or reputation to achieve a goal
Self-reliant	Can accomplish tasks or handle situations alone with confidence
<i>Feminine Traits</i>	
Affectionate	Openly expressing warm feelings; hugging, touching, holding
Emotionally expressive	Allowing feelings to show, including temper tantrums, crying, or laughing
Impetuous	Quick to act without thinking of the consequences; impulsive
Nurturing	Actively caring and aiding another's development, be it physically or emotionally
Panicky	Reacting to situation with hysteria; crying, shouting, running
Passive	Following another's lead and not being active in a situation
Tender	Handling someone with gentle sensitivity and consideration
Understanding	Being able to see and comprehend a situation from another person's perspective; showing empathy

Most of the research studies for gender stereotypes have concentrated on children's picture books or the short stories included in basal readers for beginning readers. Since they were interested in the presence or absence of particular gender stereotypical traits, if the protagonist displayed a trait once or many times, it was recorded as present only once. As Evans and Davies noted, "If a character exhibited any of the relevant traits, the trait was checked once...The trait was coded only once partly because of the simplicity of many of the stories and also for accuracy of character portrayal" (2000, p. 261). The short length and limited character development in picture books and basal readers are conducive to analysis because the protagonists are generally one-dimensional and there is a simplistic progression of events.

In fiction novels, the characters are multi-dimensional and have the opportunity to display a wide range of behaviors and attitudes through the course of the story making it difficult to condense the behaviors into single occurrences of a personality trait. For the purposes of content analysis, the novel format requires that the researcher place a much greater emphasis on the interpretation of content and specifically for this study, in the determination of the general presence or absence of gender stereotypical characteristics. The method used here was to read the entire text, consider the definitions of the sixteen traits, then decide whether the trait was an integral part of the character's core personality or a trait that was acquired as part of the growth of the character by the end of the story. As Evans and Davies stated, "traits were recorded based on the holistic portrayal of the main character or characters throughout the story, not just individual incidents in the story" (2000, p. 261).

As an example of how this interpretation of the gender stereotypes was applied in this study, the main character in *Bud, Not Buddy* was consistently portrayed as having control over his emotions. At one point he says, “No, sir, I don’t know why, but my eyes don’t cry no more” (p. 159). From a holistic perspective, his character does not portray the feminine trait of emotionally expressive. However, at another point, he finds “some rusty old valve squeaked open in me then... woop, zoop, sloop... tears started jumping out of my eyes” (p. 172-73). Although this action could be considered emotionally expressive according to the definition, it was not coded as present because this was the only incident and it was not consistent with his actions throughout the rest of the book. The process of reading and interpreting the text, then determining relevant character traits for each book on the Battle of the Books list was performed. If a trait was present a mark was placed in the corresponding cell in an excel spreadsheet (Appendix C).

Validity and reliability

The reliability and validity of any content analysis is dependent upon clear and consistent labels that can be applied with certainty and very little deviation. Most studies have more than one person coding the text so there can be some determination if the coding scheme is truly clear and can be applied by multiple coders. Here, there was only one person coding the content, and the inexperience of the coder as well as the use of another research team’s established character trait definitions may have produced misinterpretations or inconsistencies in applying the labels. Of particular difficulty was deciding which gender traits were represented in the main characters. Not having any examples of how it was accomplished in other studies and relying heavily on

interpretation, the analysis would have been improved if multiple coders had been involved. As it stands, one person's interpretation of novels that were anywhere from 150 to 450 pages in length and included complex characters and plots were the basis for the analysis in this study.

The validity of the study is dependent upon choosing an appropriate sample to analyze. By choosing a state-wide NCSLMA Battle of the Books booklist and the local Wake County Public School System Middle School Novel list, the study may be able to be generalized to the state, but it would be difficult to extend the generalization much farther. The education system and their choices of books drawn from the mass quantities of available reading materials vary so much from state-to-state that there would be no way to know if similar results would be achieved elsewhere.

Results

The final sample of books analyzed for the study included 194 books from the Wake County Public School Novel List and 27 books from the North Carolina School Library Media Association 2009-2010 Middle School Battle of the Books list. One section of the Wake County novel list was not included in the analysis because these books were categorized as "NOT Recommended for Middle School Instruction" and it is assumed that these titles would not be easily accessible to the teachers or students. Of note is one book on the NCSLMA Battle of the Books list, *Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie*, that was included in the "Questionable Titles – Proceed with Caution (and with principal's approval)" section of the Wake County Public School Novel List. It would be interesting to see how the school system reconciles the discrepancy between having

the book on the Battle of the Books list and yet needing principal approval for use, but for the purposes of this study, the title remained a part of the analysis. With overlap in mind, only eleven of the 27 Battle of the Books titles are included on the Wake County novel list. For the purposes of the study, each list was totaled separately so these eleven titles are included in both sets of data results for gender bias in title and main character.

Gender bias in title

Based on the titles alone of the 194 books on the Wake County novel list, there were 21 titles (11%) categorized as male, 15 titles (8%) categorized as female, and 158 (81%) categorized as no gender. Thus, the ratio of male to female titles was 1.4:1.

(Figure 1) There is some room for error in these results because some titles like *Letters from Rifka* and *Nory Ryan's Song*, contain masculine or feminine names, however they were coded as no gender because most students would not be able to distinguish the appropriate sex associated with the name and thus, effectively render the titles non-descript for gender purposes.

Again, based solely on the title, The Battle of the Books list contained 9 titles (33%) categorized as male, 3 titles (11%) categorized as female, and 15 titles (56%) categorized as no gender, with a male to female ratio of 3:1. (Figure 2) While this list also has a majority of titles that show no gender association, the difference between male and female titles is more significant when considered in more concrete terms. For every feminine title on the list, there are three that are masculine which creates quite a disparity. The coding for this list has fewer gray area titles so there should not be much variation in results if they were coded by another researcher.

Figure 1: Gender in title for WCPSS novel list (n=194)

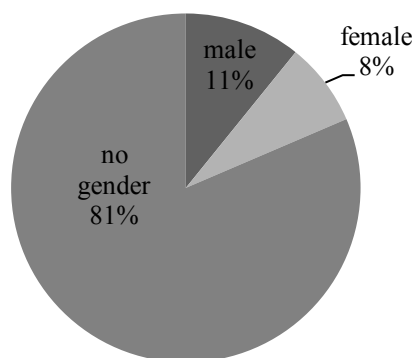
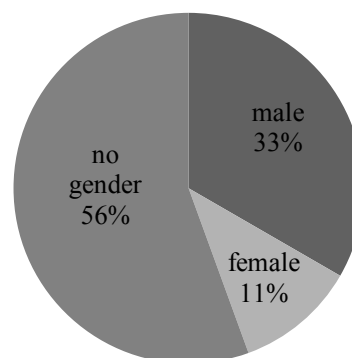


Figure 2: Gender in title for Battle of the Books list (n=27)

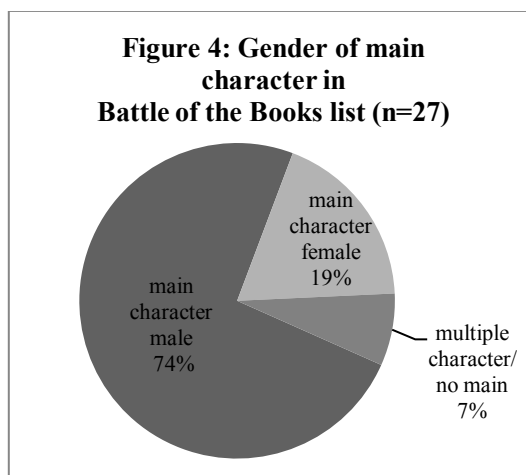
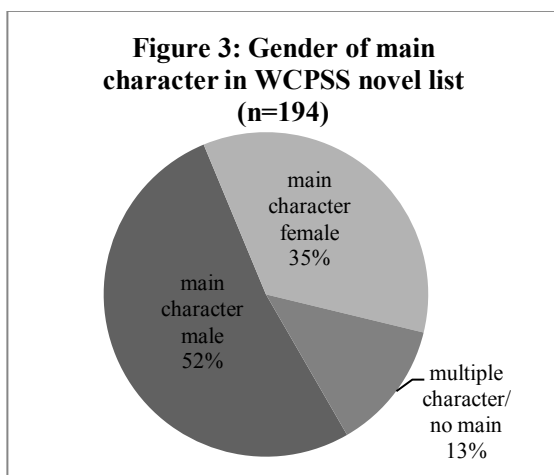


Gender bias in main character

After examining summaries of the texts, the Wake County Middle School Novel list included 101 titles (52%) with males as the main character, 68 titles (35%) with females as the main character, and 25 titles (23%) where there were no distinguishable main characters. This corresponds to a male to female ratio for main character of 1.5:1. (Figure 3) As mentioned in the methodology section, non-fiction titles were included in the analysis of gender of the main character because the books can emphasize the endeavors of particular males or females. For example, the list contains two books about the life of Anne Frank as well as the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. In both cases, the main character could easily be coded as male or female.

For the 27 books on the NCSLMA Battle of the Books list, 20 titles (74%) had a male main character, 5 titles (19%) had a female main character, and 2 titles (7%) had multiple main characters so they were not coded. (Figure 4) The ratio of male to female main characters is 4:1. The Battle of the Books list had only one non-fiction title, *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story about Brain Science* and it was coded as a

male main character. There were two books, *Chasing Vermeer* and *The View From Saturday*, that were coded with multiple main characters.



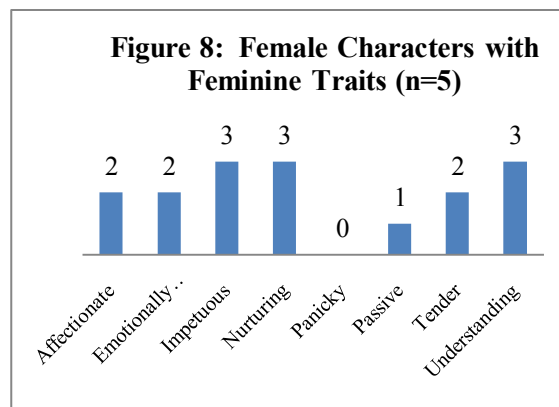
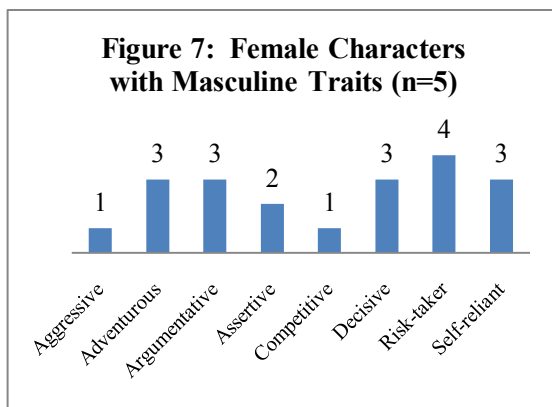
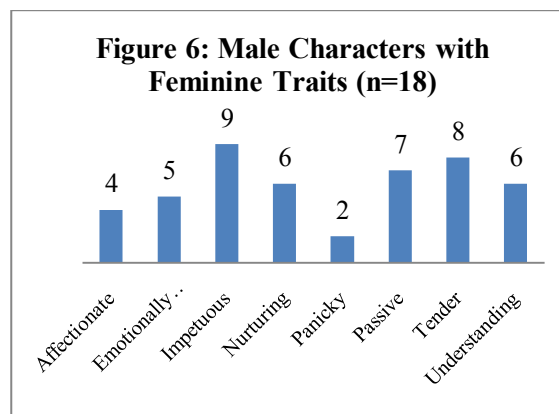
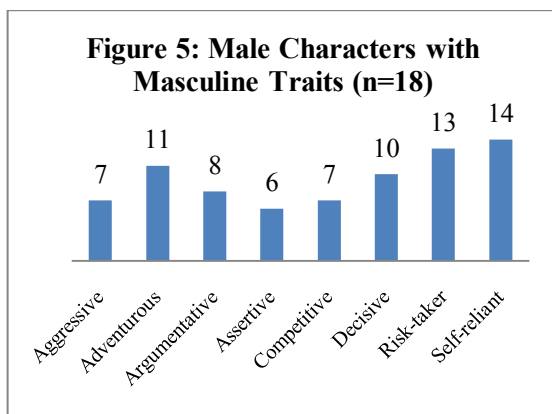
Gender character traits in main character

Because of the limited time frame for this research study, only the NCSLMA Middle School Battle of the Books list was coded for gender stereotypical personality traits. After reading each book, the personality traits that the main character exhibited were recorded on an excel spreadsheet.

Of the 27 books on the Battle of the Books list, the gender stereotypical traits of the main characters for 23 books were analyzed and recorded (See Appendix C). *White Fang*, *Chasing Vermeer*, *The View from Saturday*, and *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome But True Story About Brain Science* were not coded for personality traits for the following reasons. For *Chasing Vermeer* and *The View from Saturday*, the main characters were both boys and girls. The coding instrument was not designed to be able to distinguish which gender character had which personality traits, so the traits were not included in the analysis. For *White Fang*, the main character is a dog and several of the personality

traits are specific to humans, such as argumentative and emotionally expressive. In order to be consistent, *White Fang*'s personality traits were not included in the analysis. *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome But True Story About Brain Surgery* is a non-fiction book. Because there is no conscious decision on the author's part to portray the main character in a non-fiction book in a stereotypical manner, the personality traits for this book were not included in the analysis.

As Figures 5–8 show, masculine and feminine personality traits were spread across male and female main characters. In one case, the feminine “panicky” trait was actually displayed by more male characters than female although by no means was it common. In fact, panicky had the lowest incidence of all character traits.



While Figures 5-8 display the actual numbers of personality traits observed for the main characters for both sexes, Table 2 shows what percentage of the female and male main characters displayed a particular personality trait.

Table 2: Percentage of Main Characters Exhibiting Masculine and Feminine Characteristics by Sex from the 2009-2010 NCSLMA Middle School Battle of the Books booklist		
Gender Characteristics	Male Characters (n=18)	Female Characters (n=5)
<i>Masculine traits</i>		
Aggressive	38.9% (7)	20.0% (1)
Adventurous	61.1% (11)	60.0% (3)
Argumentative	44.4% (8)	60.0% (3)
Assertive	33.3% (6)	40.0% (2)
Competitive	38.9% (7)	20.0% (1)
Decisive	55.6% (10)	60.0% (3)
Risk-taker	72.2% (13)	80.0% (4)
Self-reliant	77.8% (14)	60.0% (3)
<i>Feminine traits</i>		
Affectionate	22.2% (4)	40.0% (2)
Emotionally expressive	27.8% (5)	40.0% (2)
Impetuous	50.0% (9)	60.0% (3)
Nurturing	33.3% (6)	60.0% (3)
Panicky	11.1% (2)	0.0% (0)
Passive	38.9% (7)	20.0% (1)
Tender	44.4% (8)	40.0% (2)
Understanding	33.3% (6)	60.0% (3)

Because the difference in the number of male and female main characters was so great (20 males to 5 females), a simple comparison of the number of occurrences of each trait for each sex would not tell much. The number of occurrences had to be converted to the percentage of the characters displaying each specific trait in order to make an equitable comparison.

When the percentages are compared, some interesting patterns emerge. For the masculine traits, aggressive and competitive were exhibited nearly twice as many times in male characters (38.9%) as female characters (20%). These traits and only one other masculine trait were exhibited by fewer than 40% of the male or female characters. Assertive was shown in 33.3 % of the males.

Looking at the feminine traits, there are three traits that were exhibited almost twice as many times by female characters as male characters. Affectionate was displayed by 40.0% of females and by 22.2% of males. Nurturing and understanding were exhibited by 60% of females and by 33.3% of males. Where there were only three masculine traits displayed by fewer than 40% of the characters, there are six feminine traits displayed by fewer than 40% of the characters. Three of the six are those listed above and the other three are emotionally understanding, panicky, and passive.

Discussion

Gender bias

In consideration of the first research question posed for this study, the results indicate that gender bias in the titles and main characters for both lists of books analyzed is present in varying degrees. Since there is no information explaining how the Wake County Public School System created their list of suggested reading materials for the Middle School curriculum, there can be no speculation about the criteria they considered when determining if a book was worthy of inclusion. Based on the results of the analysis performed on the list, it appears that gender could be one of the criteria used when choosing books to include on this list because both the ratio of male to female titles and

the ratio of male to female characters are relatively the same at about 1.5:1. Thinking in practical terms, for every three males that are portrayed in titles and main characters, two females are represented. While this still corresponds to an under-representation of females, it is moving in the right direction toward gender equity.

The other positive aspect of this result is related to the number of titles on the list. With 194 books on the list of suggested reading material and a fairly small discrepancy between the representation of males and females, teachers in the Wake County system could conceivably have an even distribution of male to female titles without too much effort. When teachers choose the books to integrate into the curriculum, they would just need to pay attention to the sex of the main character and then choose an equal number of titles that represent both males and females.

The more disturbing result is from the North Carolina School Library Media Middle School Battle of the Books list where the ratio of male to female words in the titles is 3:1 and the ratio of male to female main characters is 4:1. This result is interesting because on the NCSLMA website, they post the criteria they consider when choosing the books for the booklist, and gender is one of them. According to the website,

The following criteria will be used in the selection of books:

1. Grade level/reading level to be balanced as follows: 25% books above reading level, 50% on reading level, 25% below reading level.
2. Interest level: consider a variety of plots, settings, and styles; **select an equal number of books for boys and girls**; consider a variety of subject areas; select well-reviewed titles that are popular; books must be currently available; only one book from a series can be included.
3. Recommended selection guides for middle school collections will be used to select titles, such as Booklist, School Library Journal, etc. Priority will be given to national award winning titles, such as Newbery Award, Coretta Scott King Award, etc. (North Carolina School Library Media Association, 2009).

The comprehensiveness of the criteria on which the Battle of the Books list is determined, from consideration of reading level to the use of recommendation from well-known review publications, would suggest that the list includes titles that meet the needs and wants of the majority of middle school readers. The clarity and apparent inclusiveness of the criteria may also make the list appealing to teachers as a source of suggestions for materials to include in their lessons, even if their students are not participating in the Battle of the Books competition. This is where the problem exists with this particular Battle of the Books list. If teachers require students to read a selection of books from the list, the probability that the main character will be a boy is very high which means girls are left reading books in which they do not see themselves represented.

This under-representation of females as main characters could be offset if the books included strong female secondary characters. However, analyzing the books on the Battle of the Books list for this possibility, of the 20 books with male main characters, only six include female characters that play a major role. With these results in mind, the NCSLMA Middle School Battle of the Books list for 2009-2010 does not represent equitable distributions of male to female characters in the titles or the main characters which is a detriment to female students in the classrooms across the state of North Carolina where teachers use this list as a basis for determining classroom reading materials.

Gender stereotypes

Analysis of the Battle of the Books list for gender stereotypical personality traits offered another dimension for gender imbalances within the books on this list. While it is important for students to see themselves represented in the characters of what they read, the other part of the gender equation is the importance of seeing characters that display a variety of personality traits that do not conform to gender stereotypes. The results for the Battle of the Books list suggest that male and female characters are displaying both masculine and feminine personality traits, but masculine traits are proportionately higher for both sexes.

There are two examples of highly stereotypical representation of male main characters. *Stormbreaker* starred Alex Rider, a teenage spy working for the British MI6 intelligence agency. He regularly demonstrated all of the qualities that made him conform to the classic stereotypical male – aggressive, adventurous, assertive, competitive, decisive, risk-taker, and self-reliant. Peter from the book *Peter and the Starcatchers* had to deal with pirates, treasure, and a huge crocodile and in the process also displayed all of the masculine character traits.

Two other male characters predominantly displayed masculine traits with the addition of only one feminine trait. Bud from *Bud, Not Buddy* was in search of his father after spending several years in foster care and building the resiliency necessary to survive in that atmosphere. He displayed all of the masculine characteristics except argumentativeness and competitiveness but also exhibited one feminine trait, tenderness.

Peak from *Peak* became entangled in his famous mountain-climbing father's scheme of getting the youngest climber to the peak of Mt. Everest. Peak and a Tibetan

Sherpas' grandson were the unwitting competitors trying to succeed in this feat. Peak was adventurous, competitive, decisive, a risk-taker, and self-reliant. At the end of the book he displayed one feminine characteristic, understanding.

On the female side, there is one character, Esperanza from *Esperanza Rising*, who displayed the majority of feminine traits. She is affectionate, emotionally expressive, impetuous, nurturing, and tender. She was driven from her wealthy estate home in Mexico after her father was killed by bandits and forced to immigrate to the United States where she and her mother lived in a migrant farm workers camp to make a new life for themselves. Despite Esperanza's display of mostly feminine traits, she showed the masculine traits of argumentativeness and decisiveness also.

In no case was there a female character that only displayed all of the feminine traits. In all cases, the feminine traits were offset by a number of masculine traits, usually adventurousness, argumentativeness, and self-reliance.

Looking at the opposite side of the spectrum, there were several male and female characters that only displayed traits that are associated with the opposite sex. In the book *Just Ella*, the main character Ella found herself supposedly in the "happily ever after" part of her dream romance with Prince Charming. However, after spending so many years as a servant to her evil stepmother and stepsisters, she had a hard time adapting to princess protocol and the result was her character exhibiting five of the eight male traits and only one feminine trait, impetuous.

For examples of male characters displaying feminine traits, there are two books that stand out. Steven, from the book *Drums, Girls, & Dangerous Pie*, must deal with his younger brother's diagnosis and treatment for leukemia. In his interactions with his

brother, his parents, and his classmates Steven was affectionate, emotionally expressive, nurturing, tender, and understanding, all feminine personality traits.

The other male character is Jeremy, from the book *Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life*. Jeremy was both affectionate and passive and displayed only one male trait, argumentative. He must go through all sorts of machinations to open a box his deceased father left behind for him to open on his thirteenth birthday. The box was supposed to contain the meaning of life and the story was about his search for the keys to open the box and consequently, Jeremy's own search for the meaning of life. This is one of the books mentioned in the last section that included a strong female secondary character. While Jeremy demonstrated classic feminine traits during this search, his counterpart Lizzy wore the pants in the friendship and was the risk-taker, adventurer, and self-reliant character.

Similar female secondary characters can be found in *Airborn*, *Bronx Masquerade*, *The Kite Rider*, and *Peter and the Starcatchers*. The two books that had multiple main characters, *Chasing Vermeer* and *The View from Saturday* also had characters that demonstrated non-stereotypical traits in relation to their gender.

In the final analysis of gender characteristics displayed by both male and female main characters, there are 96 masculine traits (60%) and 63 feminine traits (40%). There are plenty of male and female characters exhibiting masculine traits, but the greatest discrepancy comes from the number of feminine characteristics displayed by the male main characters. The most under-represented are affectionate and emotionally expressive.

Table 4: Percentage of male characters exhibiting feminine traits	
<i>Feminine traits</i>	Male characters (n=18)
Affectionate	22.2% (4)
Emotionally expressive	27.8% (5)
Impetuous	50.0% (9)
Nurturing	33.3% (6)
Panicky	11.1% (2)
Passive	38.9% (7)
Tender	44.4% (8)
Understanding	33.3% (6)

These two characteristics in particular have negative implications if expressed too regularly by males in our society. “They grow up learning the lines and practicing moves from a timeworn script that is supposed to guarantee male self-confidence: be cool, don’t show emotion, repress feelings, be aggressive, compete, and win” (Sadker et al., 2009, p. 126). Sadker also makes the point that it is a backhanded compliment for a girl to be called a tomboy, but “our language has no word with a nonpejorative connotation for a boy acting like a girl. ‘Janegirl’ is not in our lexicon” (2009, p. 128). While it may seem an improvement in terms of gender equity for more female characters to display both feminine and masculine traits, the fact that there is a deficit in the number of male characters displaying feminine traits shows students are still being exposed to the traditional standards of masculinity.

Summary and Conclusions

It is an unfortunate reality in this society that the process by which children discover and form their own gender identity also has a strong tendency to form gender stereotypes. Building a gender schema requires placing body types, appearance, behaviors, mannerisms, occupations, and a multitude of other human characteristics into

categories that are masculine or feminine. Based on this process, children then have a basis to be able to distinguish between male and female and create their own gender identity. This categorization of human characteristics is what stereotyping is all about, always associating a particular characteristic with a particular sex. There are innumerable examples of this from associating caregivers with females, and doctors with males, to males wanting to be outside playing sports while females are inside reading. The problem with stereotypical gender schemas is that they may limit behaviors. “Some theorists have argued that when acceptance depends on fitting the gender stereotypes, children are likely to limit the range of activities they explore and the talents that they choose to develop” (Broderick & Blewitt, 2010, p. 250).

The input for building gender schemas and reinforcing gender stereotypes is all around us. As this study has presented, beginning with the feminist movement in the 1960’s, the gender information presented through children’s literature has been a focal point. In particular, children’s picture books have generally taken center stage because these books are read over and over again to children who are at the age where they are in the process of developing their gender identity and gender schema. Unfortunately, the majority of researchers found that there are gender biases as well as gender stereotypes in varying degrees throughout children’s literature.

That said, there is evidence that gender schema can be modified and gender stereotypes lessened. The study by Karniol and Gal-Disegni (2009) demonstrates that it is possible to affect the attitudes about gender issues by exposing children to books that contain characters portrayed in non-traditional gender roles and displaying non-traditional characteristics. Sadker, Sadker, and Zittleman (2009) also suggest that

exposing students to literature that portrays males and females in nonsexist roles broadens their horizons and provides additional input that can modify existing stereotypes.

As children get older and spend more time in school, the reading they do becomes more dependent upon what the teachers require and how it relates to the curriculum. Keeping in mind the advice for modifying gender stereotypes, this study focused on two lists of novels that North Carolina middle school teachers consult when deciding on materials to use in the classroom. The results were mixed.

Of the two book lists analyzed, the Wake County Public School Middle School Novel list offers a fairly balanced selection of titles representing males and females in title and main character. The 2009-2010 North Carolina School Library Media Association Middle School Battle of the Books booklist does not represent a balance of male and female titles and main characters despite having gender considerations in their criteria for inclusion. With regard to gender stereotypes, only the NCSLMA Battle of the Books was analyzed and the main characters displayed a mixture of traits, but there was an under-representation of male characters displaying feminine traits. This result reinforces the notion that it is acceptable for girls and women to display masculine traits, but less acceptable for boys and men to show affection and emotions, in particular. Analysis of the WCPSS Middle School Novel list for gender stereotypes would be an interesting exercise to form an overall consensus on gender equity in reading materials for middle school students at least in Wake County.

The significance of this study as well as those that continue to question gender bias and stereotypes in literature is not to dwell on gender inequities, but to continue to

recognize the importance of taking gender into consideration when creating and using literature. In this case, society is relying on teachers to make informed decisions about the reading material they are incorporating into their middle school curriculum so students can be exposed to more gender-fair or gender-neutral titles.

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Appendix A: NCSLMA Battle of the Books Booklist 2009-2010

<u>2009-2010</u>	
Title	Author
Airborn	Kenneth Oppel
Bronx Masquerade	Nikki Grimes
Bud, Not Buddy	Christopher Paul Curtis
Castaways of the Flying Dutchman	Brian Jacques
Chasing Vermeer	Blue Balliett
Chicken Boy	Frances O’Roark Dowell
Code Talker	Joseph Bruchac
Dicey's Song	Cynthia Voigt
Drums, Girls, & Dangerous Pie	Jordan Sonnenblick
Esperanza Rising	Pam Muñoz Ryan
Flush	Carl Hiaasen
Freak the Mighty	Rodman Philbrick
The Graveyard Book **	Neil Gaiman
Invitation to the Game	Monica Hughes
Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life	Wendy Mass
Just Ella****	Margaret Peterson Haddix
The Kite Rider	Geraldine McCaughrean
The Lottery Rose	Irene Hunt
Peak	Roland Smith
Peter and the Starcatchers	Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson
Phineas Gage	John Fleischman
Storm Warriors	Elisa Carbone
Stormbreaker	Anthony Horowitz
Summer of My German Soldier	Bette Greene
The View from Saturday	E.L. Konigsburg
The Wednesday Wars	Gary D. Schmidt
White Fang *****	Jack London

**The Graveyard Book (Due to be released as a paperback in May)

****Just Ella (Aladdin Paperbacks edition)

***** White Fang (Puffin Books edition complete and unabridged)

Appendix B: Wake County Public School System suggested book list

Middle School Novel List

Tried and True	
Approved for Whole Class Instruction	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>
A Christmas Carol	Charles Dickens
A Day No Pigs Would Die	Robert Newton Peck
A Long Way from Chicago	Richard Peck
A Thief in the Village	James Berry
A Year Down Yonder	Richard Peck
Across Five Aprils	Irene Hunt
Adventures of Tom Sawyer	Mark Twain
Airborn	Kenneth Oppel
Amah	Laurence Yep
An American Plague	Jim Murphy
Anne Frank	Anne Frank
Anne Frank Remembered	Miep Gies/ Alison Leslie Gold
Anne of Green Gables	L.M. Montgomery
April Morning	Howard Fast
Arrival	Shaun Tan
Belle Prater's Boy	Ruth White
Black Pearl	Scott O'Dell
Black Potatoes: The Story of the Great Irish Famine	Susan Campbell Bartoletti
Blizzard: The Storm that Changed America	Jim Murphy
Blood on the River: Jamestown 1607	Elisa Carbone
Boy Who Dared	Susam Cambbell Bartoletti
Breadwinner	Deborah Ellis
Bridge to Terabithia	Katherine Paterson/Donna Diamond
Call of the Wild	Jack London
Casting the Gods Adrift	Geraldine McCaughrean
Catch a Tiger By the Toe	Ellen Levine
Catherine, Called Birdy	Karen Cushman
Cay	Theodore Taylor
Chain of Fire	Beverley Naidoo
City of Ember	Jeanne DuPrau
Clay Marble	Minfong Ho
Climbing the Stairs	Padma Venkatraman
Codetalker: A Novel About the Navajo Marines in WWII	Joseph Bruchac
Contender	Robert Lipsyte
Counting on Grace	Elizabeth Winthrop
Devil's Arithmetic	Jane Yolen
Dime a Dozen	Nikki Grimes

Dr. Franklin's Island	Ann Halam
Door in the Wall	Marguerite De Angeli
Dovey Coe	Frances O'Roark Dowell
Dragonwings	Laurence Yep
Ear, the Eye and the Arm	Nancy Farmer
Earthquake at Dawn	Kristiana Gregory
Ella Enchanted	Gail Carson Levine
Ender's Game	Orson Scott Card
Escape From Warsaw	Ian Serraillier
Esperanza Rising	Pam Munoz Ryan
Farewell to Manzanar	James A. Houston, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston
Fearless Fernie: Hanging Out with Fernie and Me	Gary Soto
Fever 1793	Laurie Halse Anderson
Firegirl	Tony Abbott
Flight to Freedom	Ana Veciana-Suarez
Flush	Carl Hiaasen
Flying to the Moon: An Astronaut's Story	Michael Collins
Football Genius	Tim Green
Football Hero	Tim Green
Freak the Mighty	Rodman Philbrick
Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg...	Ann Bausum
Gathering Blue	Lois Lowry
Girl Son	Anne E. Neuberger
Giver	Lois Lowry
Glory Field	Walter Dean Myers
Goodnight, Mr. Tom	Michelle Magorian
Green Angel	Alice Hoffman
Hatchet	Gary Paulsen
Hobbit	J.R.R. Tolkien
Holes	Louis Sachar
Homecoming	Cynthia Voigt
Hoot	Carl Hiaasen
House of Dies Drear	Virginia Hamilton
I, Juan de Pareja	Elizabeth Borton De Trevino
Invisible Allies: Microbes that Shape our Lives	Jeanette Farrell
Jaguar	Roland Smith
Joel Pigza Loses Control	Jack Gantos
Johnny Tremain	Esther Forbes
Journey to Jo'burg	Beverley Naidoo
Journey to the River Sea	Eva Ibbotson
Kids at Work: Lewis Hine and the Crusade...	Russell Freedman
Kids on Strike!	Susan Campbell Bartoletti
Killer Angels	Michael Shaara
Let the Circle Be Unbroken	Mildred D. Taylor
Letters from Rifka	Karen Hesse

Life as We Knew It	Susan Beth Pfeffer
Light in the Forest	Conrad Richter
Lightning Thief	Rick Riordan
Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy	Gary D. Schmidt
Long Way from Chicago	Richard Peck
Lord of the Nutcracker Men	Ian Lawrence
Loud Silence of Francine Green	Karen Cushman
Maniac Magee	Jerry Spinelli
Maritcha: A Nineteenth Century American Girl	Tonya Bolden
Master Puppeteer	Katherine Paterson/Haru Wells
Max the Mighty	Rodman Philbrick
Midsummer Night's Dream	William Shakespeare
Midwife's Apprentice	Karen Cushman
Milkweed	Jerry Spinelli
Miracle Boys	Jacqueline Woodson
Miracle Worker	William Gibson
Mortal Engines	Philip Reeve
Moves Make the Man	Bruce Brooks
My Brother Sam is Dead	James Lincoln Collier/Christopher Collier
Mzungu Boy	Meja Mwangi
Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass	Frederick Douglass
Night of the Twisters	Ivy Ruckman
No More Dead Dogs	Gordon Korman
Nory Ryan's Song	Patricia Reilly Giff
Number the Stars	Lois Lowry
Other Side of Truth	Beverley Naidoo
Out of the Dust	Karen Hesse
Outsiders	S. E. Hinton
Park's Quest	Katherine Paterson
Peak	Roland Smith
Pearl	John Steinbeck
Pigman	Paul Zindel
Prince and the Pauper	Mark Twain
Rascal	Sterling North
Red Badge of Courage	Stephen Crane
Red Moon at Sharpsburg	Rosemary Wells
Red Pony	John Steinbeck
Regarding the Fountain	Kate Klise
River Between Us	Richard Peck
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry	Mildred D. Taylor
Sadako	Eleanor Coerr
Schooled	Gordan Korman
Seedfolks	Paul Fleischman
Seekers	Erin Hunter
Shades of Gray	Carolyn Reeder
Shadow Spinner	Susan Fletcher
Shakespeare's Scribe	Gary L. Blackwood

Skin I'm In	Sharon Flake
Smiler's Bones	Peter Lerangis
So B. It	Sarah Weeks
Somewhere in the Darkness	Walter Dean Myers
Sounder	William H. Armstrong
Stargirl	Jerry Spinelli
Starry Messenger	Peter Sis
Stormbreaker	Anthony Horowitz
Storm Warriors	Elisa Carbone
Strays Like Us	Richard Peck
Streams to the River, River to the Sea	Scott O'Dell
Summer of My German Soldier	Bette Greene
Taking Terri Mueller	Norma Fox Mazer
Talking Earth	Jean Craighead George
Team Moon: How 400,000 People Landed Apollo 11	Catherine Thimmesh
That Was Then, This Is Now	S. E. Hinton
The House of the Scorpion	Nancy Farmer
There's A Girl in My Hammerlock	Jerry Spinelli
Tracking Trash: Flotsam, Jetsam, and the Science..	Loree Griffin Burns
True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle	Avi
Tuck Everlasting	Natalie Babbitt
Under a War Torn Sky	L.M. Elliott
Up Before Daybreak: Cotton and People in America	Deborah Hopkinson
View from Saturday	E. L. Konigsburg
Walk Two Moons	Sharon Creech
Walkabout	James Vance Marshall
Watsons Go to Birmingham	Christopher Paul Curtis
Wednesday Wars	Gary D. Schmidt
Weirdo	Theodore Taylor
Westing Game	Ellen Raskin
What Would Joey Do?	Jack Gantos
When My Name Was Keoko	Linda Sue Park
When Plague Strikes: The Black Death, Smallpox...	James Cross Giblin
Where the Lilies Bloom	Bill Cleaver/Vera Cleaver
Where the Red Fern Grows	Wilson Rawls
Wildlife Detectives: How Forensic Scientists...	Donna Jackson Kallner
Witch of Blackbird Pond	Elizabeth George Speare
Witness	Karen Hesse
Wolf Brother	Michelle Paver
Wrinkle in Time	Madeleine L'Engle
Year Down Yonder	Richard Peck
Year of Impossible Goodbyes	Sook Nyul Choi
Z for Zachariah	Robert C. O'Brien

Questionable Titles Proceed with Caution (and with principal's approval)	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>
The Mousetrap	Agatha Christie
Child of the Owl	Laurence Yep
David Copperfield (adult literature)	Charles Dickens
Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie (mature content)	Jordan Sonnenblick
Everlost (mature content)	Neal Shusterman
Facing the Lion: Growing Up Maasai (mature content)	Joseph Lekuton
Forged by Fire (mature content)	Sharon M. Draper
House on Mango Street (mature content)	Sandra Cisneros
I Am a Taxi (mature content)	Deborah Ellis
Leon's Story (mature content)	Leon Walter Tillage
Make Lemonade (mature content)	Virginia Euwer Wolff
Marley and Me	John Grogan
Money Hungry (mature content)	Sharon Flake
Monster (mature content)	Walter Dean Myers
Othello (mature content)	William Shakespeare
Red Glass (mature content)	Laura Resau
Red Kayak (mature content)	Priscilla Cummings
Samurai Shortstop (mature content)	Alan Gratz
Slam (mature content)	Walter Dean Myers
Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes	Chris Crutcher
Tangerine (mature content)	Edward Bloor
Tears of a Tiger (grades 9 and up)	Sharon M. Draper
The Cage (mature content)	Ruth Minsky Sender
The Fellowship of the Ring	J.R.R. Tolkien
True Believer (mature content)	Virginia Euwer Wolff
NOT Recommended for Middle School Instruction	
The Golden Compass (strong content)	Philip Pullman
The Boy in the Striped Pajamas (strong content)	John Boyne
The Good Earth (strong content) Chinese Stereotype	Pearl S. Buck
Touchin Spirit Bear (strong content) Navtive American stereotype	Ben Mikaelson
Unwind (strong content)	Neal Shusterman
Darkness Before Dawn (XXX Strong content)	Sharon M. Draper
Education of Little Tree (Native Amer. Stereotype)	Forrest Carter
Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman (excerpts could be used strategically)	Ernest J. Gaines

Red Keep (strong content)	Allen French
<p>***Texts other than those from this list must have prior approval from the principal or designee before being assigned. WCPSS defines assigned reading as any text used by the whole class, by a group within the class, by a literature class, and/or during summer reading.</p> <p>The Request for Prior Approval (Assigning Supplemental Texts) form can be found on the WCPSS Intranet site.</p>	

Appendix C: Coding Instrument with coded data

2009-2010 NCSLMA State Middle School Battle of the Books booklist																											
	Airborn	Bronx Masquerade	Bud, Not Buddy	Castaways of the Flying Dutchman	Chicken Boy	Code Talker	Drums, Girls, & Dangerous Pie	Flush	Freak the Mighty	The Graveyard Book	Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life	The Kite Rider	The Lottery Rose	Peak	Peter and the Starcatchers	Storm Warriors	Stormbreaker	The Wednesday Wars	White Fang	Chasing Vermeer	Dacey's Song	Esperanza Rising	Invitation to the Game	Just Ella	Summer of My German Soldier	The View from Saturday	Totals
Masculine name in title	1	1	1	1	1	1				1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
feminine name in title							1															1	1	1		3	
no gender in title	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	15
main character male	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1								20
main character female																					1	1	1	1	1	5	
multiple characters - no main																				1					1	2	
Masculine traits																										96	
Aggressive	1	1	1						1		1	1	1				1				1					8	
Adventurous	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	14	
Argumentative	1		1	1	1	1				1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	11	
Assertive	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						1	1	1	1	1	1			1		1	1		8	
Competitive	1		1	1	1	1							1	1	1	1	1	1				1				8	
Decisive	1	1	1	1					1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	13	
Risk-taker	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	17	
Self-reliant	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	17	
Feminine Traits																										63	
Affectionate		1		1	1	1	1		1												1	1				6	
Emotionally expressive							1				1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1				7	
Impetuous	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1	1	1	12	
Nurturing	1	1	1	1	1	1	1					1	1	1	1						1	1	1	1		9	
Panicky								1									1	1								2	
Passive	1		1	1					1	1	1	1	1				1	1						1		8	
Tender		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	
Understanding	1	1			1	1	1	1	1				1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	